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SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PIONEER JAKE KHEEL TO KEYNOTE CARIBBEAN COASTAL TOURISM INNOVATORS SYMPOSIUM

~ Youthful visionary to share best practices in coastal resorts management at Caribbean Tourism Innovators Symposium in July ~

(BRIDGETOWN, Barbados) 8 May 2014. Jake Kheel, Environmental Director for Puntacana Resort & Club, one of the most successful development companies in the Dominican Republic, will be a keynote speaker at the third annual Symposium for Innovators in Coastal Tourism, to be held at St. George's University in Grenada, 9-11 July, 2014.

The Symposium, which is a collaborative effort between the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) and the Center for Responsible Travel (CREST), is expected to draw some 150 participants from the Caribbean and elsewhere in the Americas.

"For the past 15 years, the Grupo PUNTACANA has developed experimental projects that serve as living, breathing examples of solutions to some of the tourism industry's greatest social and environmental challenges," says Kheel, who is also Executive Director of the not-for-profit Puntacana Ecological Foundation.

He added, "The Foundation has worked to offer a vision for development in the Caribbean that balances economic growth, environmental protection, community inclusion, and a celebration of local culture. We are pleased to participate in the CTO/ CREST Symposium both to share our experience in sustainable tourism, as well as learn from other thought leaders in this field."



“In keeping with our purpose to lead sustainable tourism in the Caribbean, the CTO is pleased join CREST and Grenada’s Ministry of Tourism in this unique and important sustainable tourism symposium. Coastal and marine tourism are vital to our economies and tourism product and it is critical that our industry personnel are kept current on the trends and best-practices in sustainable tourism management,” says Gail Henry, CTO’s Sustainable Tourism Product Specialist.

The three-day event will feature a rich mix of some 40 experts in various aspects of sustainable coastal and marine tourism. Among the confirmed speakers are: Ewald Biemans, owner of the eco-award winning Bucuti & Tara Beach Resorts in Aruba; Salli Felton, Chief Executive of The Travel Foundation; Mark Spalding, CEO of The Ocean Foundation; Jonathan Tourtellot, Geotourism Editor for *National Geographic Traveler*; Dr. Murray Simpson, Executive Officer of CARIBSAVE; Natasha Ward, an environmental specialist with the InterAmerican Development Bank; and Russ Fielden, owner of True Blue Bay Resort, a leading eco-certified hotel in Grenada.

The Symposium’s 16 workshops and five plenary sessions will cover a range of topics, including climate change mitigation and adaption for coastal tourism; financing sustainable tourism; innovations in large and small coastal resort and vacation home design and operations; ‘greening’ marinas, spas, and golf courses; impacts of cruise tourism; travelers’ philanthropy; sustainable travel trends; and building symbiotic relationships between coastal tourism and marine protected areas. The event will also feature several documentary films on coastal tourism, field trips to leading tourism attractions in Grenada, and an Eco-Expo.

In keeping with the sustainable tourism theme, delegates will stay at four of the island’s eco-friendly boutique resorts. Host country, Grenada, will also use the occasion to showcase the island’s wealth of cultural and natural attractions under its new tourism marketing brand, “Pure Grenada.

Details and updates about the Symposium, including the program, speakers, registration, field trips, and sponsorship are available at: www.ctocrestsymposium.com. For more information about attending the Symposium contact Samantha Hogenson at CREST: shogenson@responsibletravel.org or 202-347-9203, ext. 414 or Sylma Brown-Bramble: CTOny@caribtourism.com or 212-635-9530.

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About the Caribbean Tourism Organization

The Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), with headquarters in Barbados and offices in New York and London, is the Caribbean's tourism development agency comprising membership of over 30 countries and territories including Dutch, English, French and Spanish, as well as a myriad of private sector allied members. The CTO's vision is to position the Caribbean as the most desirable, year round, warm weather destination, and its purpose is Leading Sustainable Tourism - One Sea, One Voice, One Caribbean.

Among the benefits to its members the organization provides specialized support and technical assistance in sustainable tourism development, marketing, communications, advocacy, human resource development, event planning & execution and research & information technology.

In addition the CTO, in partnership with the Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association, jointly and equally owns the Caribbean Tourism Development Company, a marketing and business development entity dedicated to promoting the Caribbean brand worldwide.

CTO's Headquarters is located at Baobab Tower, Warrens, St. Michael, Barbados BB 22026; Tel: (246) 427-5242; Fax: (246) 429-3065; E-mail: CTObarbados@caribtourism.com.

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For more information on the CTO, please visit www.OneCaribbean.org.

Get the latest CTO updates on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/ctotourism>.

Connect with CTO on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/CaribbeanTourismOrganization>.

About the Center for Responsible Travel (CREST):

The Center for Responsible Travel (CREST) is a unique non-profit organization affiliated with Stanford University, devoted to increasing the positive global impact of responsible tourism. Founded in 2003, CREST functions as a bi-coastal institute, with offices in Washington, DC, and at Stanford University in California.



CREST stands alone in the areas of environmentally sustainable and socially responsible tourism, having built an international network of highly-trained experts providing interdisciplinary analysis and solutions, as well as publications, conferences, courses, training, and educational workshops. CREST delivers programs and services in field research, feasibility and impact studies, market research, certification programs, traveler's philanthropy and strengthening sustainable tourism and ecotourism. CREST's mission is *to promote responsible tourism policies and practices globally so that local communities may thrive and steward their cultural resources and biodiversity.*

The rapid pace of resort and vacation home developments along coastlines and on islands is contributing to a variety of environmental and social issues. CREST has sought to critically address these through research and analysis of the coastal tourism sector – the fastest growing sector in the tourism industry – in order to lessen the social and environmental impact of these developments, and increase the benefits for local communities on the coast.

CREST has extensive experience examining and providing policy recommendations to the coastal tourism sector including several reports and publications: 1) "Alternative Development Models & Good Practices for Sustainable Coastal Tourism: A Framework for Decision Makers in Mexico", a report which compiles existing best practices for sustainable, large-scale coastal tourism developments in Mexico, and provides recommendations for implementation at the policy level; 2) "The Impact of Tourism Related Development along Costa Rica's Pacific Coast", a multi-dimensional study which critically assesses the growth, trends and impacts of tourism and tourism related development along Costa Rica's Pacific Coast; 3) "Global Trends in Coastal Tourism", a study funded by WWF, which analyzes global trends in coastal and marine tourism; 4) "Cruise Tourism Impacts in Costa Rica & Honduras: Policy Recommendations for Decision Makers" and "Cruise Tourism in Belize: Perceptions of Economic, Social and Environmental Impacts", two reports which take a critical look at the impacts of the cruise tourism industry in Central America.

For more information about CREST, please visit www.responsibletravel.org or contact staff@responsibletravel.org.

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